Maharishi on the Brahma Sutras:

Giving a Vision of Chapter 1, Section 1

(From *Conversations with Maharishi,* Volume 1,

pages 186-89)

Questions and Answers:

Below are listed the implied questions, and the answers given to them by particular sūtras. The numbers of the sūtras are in parentheses.

1. What is the basis of the knowledge of Brahman?

It is present here and now. (1)

2. What is Brahman?

It is the ultimate reality, the source of scripture, the synthesis of all. (2–4)

3. How is Brahman realized?

By direct cognition supported by scripture. (5) In terms of the Self — not as an object, not secondary. (6)

4. What is the benefit of realization?

Brahman becomes a living reality of daily life in eternal liberation. (7)

It is exclusive of nothing, inclusive of all. (8)

5. Why is it simple to realize Brahman?

Because it is realized as the Self. (9, see also 6)

Because realization comes in a very natural way. (10)

6. What is the proof of realization?

Direct experience and shruti (scripture). (9–11)

7. What is the nature of Brahman?

It is blissful because of practice. (12)

It is abundant. (13)

It is the ultimate cause. (14)

It is indescribable — what the scriptures describe is just the mantra and not Brahman. (15)

It is without a second. (16)

8. How does it differ from everything else — what is it?

Oneness is found by way of different layers of creation, one within the other. The teaching of difference is that of different layers of creation. Ultimately there is the one, indivisible, non-relative, absolute Brahman. (17)

One knows through one's desire. All desires lead to the final goal in which no desire is left. The field of no desire, of fulfilment, is Brahman. (18)

Desire is the natural tendency of life, and this is enough to realize Brahman. (19)

9. Where is it?

It is within. (20)

And even without. (21)

10. What are the means [stages] of realizing it?

Ākāsha (space). (22)
~~(22)~~ Prāna (breath). (23)
Jyoti (light). (24)

11. What is the practical method of realizing it?

Surrender of the mind through the recitation of the mantra and thereby direct cognition. (25)

Experience of beings as the ray of Brahman; that is, when one comes out [of Transcendental Consciousness] every- thing is in terms of Brahman. This experience is supported by shruti. (26)

12. How does the experience become

permanent? The inward stroke (25)

and the outward stroke (26)

together make the state of Brahman permanent. (27)

13. What is the principle of realization?

Prana (breath) following the field of Brahman: the impulse of individual life merging into the universality of Brahman. This is a natural principle of evolution. (28)

14. Does Brahman become a living reality?

Yes, the speaker is Brahman. This is how it becomes a living reality. It penetrates all layers of life. (29)

15. Is there an example of someone having attained the state of Brahman?

Yes, Vāmadeva. This is an authentic example from the shruti.

(30)

16. Can anyone realize Brahman?

Yes, because prāna[170] is the sign of Brahman, and prāna can be cultured in any state, whether under the influence of sattva, rajas, or tamas.[171] (31)